

## INDEXING THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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DECEMBER 7, 1920.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. KIESS, from the Committee on Printing, submitted the following

### REPORT.

[To accompany H. J. Res. 384.]

The Committee on Printing, to which was referred the joint resolution (H. J. Res. 384) providing that the indexes of the Congressional Record shall be prepared by the Superintendent of Documents, having had the same under consideration, reports it back with the recommendation that the joint resolution do pass.

The joint resolution (H. J. Res. 384) reads as follows:

That, beginning with the first session of the Sixty-seventh Congress and thereafter, the semimonthly and session indexes of the Congressional Record shall be promptly prepared by the Superintendent of Documents of the Government Printing Office, under the direction of the Joint Committee on Printing, which shall also direct the form and manner of the publication and distribution of said indexes; a sufficient number of competent persons shall be employed for that purpose by the Superintendent of Documents at such compensations as shall be appropriated for, and such persons, when not engaged in indexing the Record, shall do such other indexing and cataloguing provided for by law as said superintendent shall assign to them.

The above joint resolution is intended to amend and supersede section 14 of the printing act approved January 12, 1895, which reads as follows:

The Joint Committee shall designate to the Public Printer a competent person to prepare the semimonthly and session index to the Congressional Record, and shall fix and regulate the compensation to be paid by the Public Printer for the said work and direct the form and manner of its publication and distribution.

Under existing law the Joint Committee on Printing has had to place the indexing of the Record practically on a contract basis. The statute quoted above restricts the committee to the designation of only one person as indexer of the Record. As a matter of fact, not less than five persons have been employed regularly on that work for many years. Consequently the committee has been required to fix the compensation for the one person it was permitted by law to desig-

nate at a sufficient rate to enable him to employ the necessary number of assistants to prepare the index. The work of the indexer and his assistants depending, as it does, upon the size of the Record and the length of the sessions of Congress, is of corresponding uncertainty. For this reason the committee has never felt justified in placing the indexer upon a fixed salary which would have to be sufficient to include all the assistants employed by him. Therefore the plan of compensating the indexer according to the number of pages in the Record was adopted in 1881 by authority of Congress and has been continued ever since then. The indexer has never received any compensation except for the sessions of Congress, and then only according to the actual number of printed pages in the permanent Record for the respective session.

The rate of compensation paid the indexer must be determined at the time the indexer is designated by the committee, and this has had to be more or less of an estimate, since no one can tell in advance the number of pages there will be in the Record of any session. The indexer has been required to employ out of his compensation an adequate force at all times to index the Record promptly, whether it is large or small and whether the session is long or short. This situation has resulted in some indexers receiving considerably more compensation than others. It is to remedy this inequality and uncertainty that the committee decided to propose this transfer of the Record indexing to the Superintendent of Documents, who can handle this work in connection with other indexing for Congress which his office is already required by law to do under the direction of the Joint Committee on Printing.

When the present plan of indexing the Record was approved by Congress in the act of February 8, 1881, and reenacted in the general printing law of January 12, 1895, the sessions of Congress were comparatively short and there was a corresponding uniformity in the size of the Record. Consequently the work required of the indexer was much more certain and his proper compensation could more readily be determined. In recent years, however, beginning with the Sixty-second Congress, the size of the Record has increased by leaps and bounds until in one Congress, the Sixty-third, the Record was considerably more than double the average size for at least a quarter of a century. It was in fact the largest Record in the history of the Congress. The average size of the Record for the 10 Congresses preceding the Sixty-third was 14,474 pages a Congress, while the Record for the Sixty-third Congress reached a total of 31,255 pages. The average for the Sixty-third, Sixty-fourth, and Sixty-fifth Congresses was 27,005 pages a Congress, or nearly double the average for the 10 preceding Congresses. This great increase in the size of the Record and the prospect that Congress will have to continue its long sessions in order to transact properly the constantly increasing volume of public business, has convinced the committee that the present method of employing and compensating the Record indexer and his assistants ought to be placed upon a more definite and businesslike basis.

This committee endeavored to meet the situation by providing in the printing bill (H. R. 8362) which passed the House on August 13, 1919, and is now pending in the Senate, that the Joint Committee on Printing shall designate a competent person "or persons" to index the Record. If authorized to name more than one person to index the

Record, the committee could have discontinued the present system of contracting with only one individual and itself have employed a sufficient number of indexers at a considerable saving to the Government. But even the plan proposed in the printing bill has its disadvantage in that the indexers so designated would have little or nothing to do when Congress is not in session.

The committee has come to the conclusion, therefore, that it will be in the interest of economy as well as of better service to the Government as a whole to transfer the indexing of the Record to the Superintendent of Documents of the Government Printing Office and to ask Congress to appropriate specifically for a sufficient number of persons to do that work. When not so employed the Record indexers can render much needed service in preparing other indexes and catalogues which the Superintendent of Documents is required by law to publish and for which he does not now have an adequate force.

In making this recommendation the committee has been greatly benefited by the experience of the present indexer, who has succeeded in placing the indexing of the Record on a proper business basis for the first time in the history of that office. Up to two years ago the successive indexers have had to depend largely upon two principal assistants, one of whom had been employed in the office continuously since 1878 and the other since 1884. These two assistants absorbed the greater part of the indexer's compensation, the remainder going to the several other employees and the indexer himself.

With the death of one of the principal assistants and the temporary resignation of the other for war service, the present indexer took advantage of the necessity to reorganize his office. It was found that better service was rendered by placing his employees on a more permanent salary basis and more nearly equalizing their pay. In making this change the present indexer has demonstrated that the work can be done by competent persons at a fair rate of compensation and that it would be very inadvisable to return to the old system. If a permanent change as proposed by the resolution is made at this time the Government can avail itself of the more businesslike system that has been adopted by the present indexer and of the skilled services of the employees who have been specially trained under his direction and the cooperation of the Superintendent of Documents.

The interest of Congress in the proper indexing of the Record has been amply protected by the provision that this work shall continue under the direction of the Joint Committee on Printing which, however, is relieved of the duty of employing the indexer and fixing his rate of compensation. A number of other indexes for Congress are prepared by the Superintendent of Documents under the direction of that committee and this work has been uniformly satisfactory. Accordingly, the committee believes that the transfer of the Record index to the Superintendent of Documents will be for the best interest of the Congress and will result in a considerable saving in the expenditures for that purpose as well as greatly increasing the facilities of the Superintendent of Documents for aiding Congress in the proper indexing of its various publications.

The committee, therefore, recommends the passage of the resolution at this session that the Superintendent of Documents may be ready to undertake the indexing with the first session of the Sixty-seventh Congress.

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